

CONGRESSMAN

Jimmy Panetta

PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE 20TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA



Dear Friends,

I am very proud to announce that the United States House of Representatives passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, also known as the Farm Bill, with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 369-47. This follows U.S. Senate passage of the bill on a 87-13 vote. I supported this version of the Farm Bill, and it is expected to be signed into law by President Donald Trump.

Passage of the Farm Bill, with strong bipartisan support, fulfills a promise to our farmers and farmworkers and our rural and urban communities. As the proud representative of the Salad Bowl of the World and founder and co-chair of the Congressional Agriculture Research Caucus, I worked to craft a Farm Bill that advances the specialty crop and organic sectors, promotes agriculture trade, expands opportunities for beginning farmers, invests in agricultural research, and increases access to nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables, without making any harmful cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). [This bill achieves all of those goals.](#)



[Click here to watch Congressman Panetta's remarks on the House floor in support of the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Report.](#)

I advocated for numerous provisions in the Farm Bill that benefit the central coast of California:

- **Specialty Crop Research:** The Central Coast is home to a \$5 billion specialty crop industry. This bill includes \$80 million per year for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI), as well as the establishment of Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Development Trust Fund which will receive \$25 million per year to address disease response efforts in the citrus industry. The bill amends the Plant Variety Protection Act to expand protections to asexual reproduction practices, while also offering continued support for pest and disease response efforts and the National Clean Plant Network.
 - **Mechanization:** The SCRI program, as well as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), is also expanded to include projects that address ongoing labor shortages through mechanization in specialty crops. Additionally, the bill requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct a review of all existing programs and develop a strategy to accelerate the development and deployment of mechanization projects.
 - I have been a vocal supporter of using every tool available to expand mechanization efforts. Given the tightening labor market, we must invest in these efforts now. I have also worked through my bipartisan Agriculture Research Caucus to increase funding for the AFRI program. Earlier this year, I led a group of almost 90 members to achieve a historic funding level of \$375 million for AFRI.
- **Organic Research:** The Central Coast is home to one of the most thriving organic agriculture industries in the country. This legislation secures critical investments in the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), establishing permanent mandatory funding of \$50 million per year by 2023. This more than doubles federal investments in organic research. I am proud that my bipartisan legislation, the Organic Agriculture Research Act (H.R. 2436), was incorporated into the final language of the Farm Bill. Additionally, this bill includes provisions that support the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program and allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to better protect domestic consumers against fraudulent organic imports.
- **Beginning and Veteran Farmers:** The agriculture industry in our community can only continue to thrive with support for the next generation of farmers and ranchers. This bill does that by combining two programs, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) and Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (Section 2501 Program), and providing permanent mandatory funding for both initiatives. The bill also expands financing opportunities for beginning farmers and veteran farmers.

- **Trade:** The domestic agriculture industry is facing unprecedented trade uncertainty due to tariff pressure and ongoing renegotiations of major trade deals. This bill provides certainty for these producer by combining existing trade programs and establishing mandatory funding for programs like Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC). The trade title includes continued support for the Market Assistance Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development Program (FMD).
- **Nutrition Assistance:** This bill preserves the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). There are no cuts to benefits, no changes to program eligibility, and no modifications to the existing work requirements. This will preserve SNAP benefits for over 74,000 residents on the Central Coast, reducing food insecurity in our communities and expanding local sales for producers.
- **Access to Fresh Fruit and Vegetables:** The Food Insecurity Nutrition Assistance (FINI) grant program supports projects that expand access to fresh fruits and vegetables for those on SNAP. Locally, this project is known as the Double Up Food Bucks California, and [I toured a local project site in Gilroy](#) during my first term. This legislation provides additional funding to support these initiatives, up to \$56 million in funding by Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.
- **Conservation:** The agriculture industry on the Central Coast understands the critical importance of conservation. The Farm Bill continues funding for many programs, providing \$2.025 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and allows the program to offer longer-term 5-10 year contracts for conservation practices. The bill also provides \$450 million in mandatory funding per year for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.
- **Rural Broadband:** To ensure that rural communities on the Central Coast continue to thrive, we must continue to ensure they have the resources and technology to remain competitive. This Farm Bill includes strong investments in rural broadband initiatives, authorizing \$350 million per year for broadband infrastructure.
- **Animal Welfare:** This legislation strips out a harmful provision, known as the King Amendment, that attempted to reverse California's state law that provides minimum space requirements for livestock and poultry. This would put California's farmers and ranchers at a disadvantage to producers in other states. Additionally, it outlaws slaughter of dogs and cats for consumption and expands the definition of stalking to include protections to pets and service animals of victims.

My work on the House Agriculture Committee and the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill are some of my highest honors during my first term in Congress. Fighting for our number one industry while in Washington, D.C. was exciting and humbling. Although there were some differences with the initial version of the Farm Bill, House and Senate Democrats and Republicans were able to work together to get it done. This accomplishment not only gives me hope for our agriculture on the Central Coast, but it also gives me hope for the Congress of the United States of America.

If you have any questions or issues that I or my staff can help you with, please call or contact my Congressional offices in Salinas, Santa Cruz, or Washington, D.C. or through <https://panetta.house.gov>. Please do not hesitate to reach out and let me know how I can continue to serve everybody on the Central Coast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Panetta', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

JIMMY PANETTA
Member of Congress